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Πᾶς δ' ὀδυνηρὸς Βίος ἀνθρώπων,
Κοὐκ ἔστι πόνων ἀνάπαυσις.

EURIP. ex Hippol. v. 190.

The mournful life of man below
Is but a weary waste of woe;
The past reminds the heart of sorrow,
And hope deludes again to-morrow.

THE Pleasures of Memory have already occupied the attention of our readers. It is a subject on which the stores of feeling and imagination might be forever poured out, without either diminution or exhaustion. There is something in the recollection of days gone by, and events past away,

which is a source of peculiar pleasure to the mind. But it is time to consider the reverse of the picture, and to attempt the delineation of those sad and mournful sensations, which memory too often tends to produce.

Life is made up of joys and of sorrows. Our cup of joy is never full, while our share of sorrow is always oppressive. We are compelled to feel and to acknowledge that joy is rather in anticipation than in reflection; that the dreams of hope serve to delight & arouse the mind to pleasurable emotions, but that from the past, sorrow and disappointment seem too generally to have extracted the imagined honey they were to contain, and converted it into poisons. As we proceed in life, we find the visions of youthful hope dissipate as we advance; like the fabled islands of the happy, they shine in lustre on the distant spectator, but a nearer approach forbids their contemplation, and

overwhelms him in the waste of troubled waters that roar around him. The fondest plans of future employment we find we must abandon; the schemes we had formed must yield to unforeseen circumstances, and bend to sudden and unthought of accidents; the ties of friendship, the dreams of love, the pantings of ambition, all sink before the destroying tide of sorrow & disappointment. Over the verdant prospects of the future, death and darkness stalk with withering footstep, and convert them into a barren and a howling wilderness. No waking dream of happiness on earth was ever realised in its full extent; since earth is not our abiding place, and since joy cannot be expected to exist, where it is darkened by the contaminations of sin, and the clouds of sorrow.

Whatever therefore may be the pleasures attributed to the exercise of memory, we are inclined to doubt whether they are not more

than counterbalanced by the painful emotions which the remembrance of the past awakens. Pleasure cannot be recalled to mind, without bringing also its accompanying pain. The anguish of disappointment, and the stings of many a dreary hour of grief, cannot be supposed to remain hushed and secret. Whatever sweet and delightful recollection we may have, whatever hour of joy may arise to memory, still they will have their pang. We recall the season of sportive infancy; — we dwell on its innocent joys, and its employments unmingled with the conflicting feelings and passions of the world; — but perhaps we may remember pleasures which have parted and left no trace behind; friends whom we loved, snatched from our youthful eyes; scenes where we delighted to wander, forever removed from our hearts.

Whereer we cast our retrospective eyes,
A waste of rocks, a dreary desert lies,
Here desolation's grasp has rent the flowers
That scatter'd fragrance round our
infant bowers,

There the wide ruin of our hopes extends,
Mark'd with memorials of departed friends.
MERES.

In tracing our course from infancy to manhood, the pleasurable feelings we may experience are ever mingled with repentance and regret. Wasted time, neglected opportunities, and slighted blessings, rise up in fearful array to the eye of memory. How often have we to mourn over the misimprovement of this happiest portion of human life. And again, when we recall the schemes and visionary hopes we had then formed; when we consider that most of them have been swept away; that the friendships and attachments of early life have been sundered by conflicting interests, by distance, and time, and absence; that the warmest emotions, the most glowing feelings, have been chilled and blasted; we feel like the decayed leaves of autumn, withering beneath the storm, & presenting but a melancholy wreck of that which once existed. Perhaps

There is nothing more calculated to make us feel our strangeness and our desolateness in this life, than to recall to mind the vast variety of acquaintance with whom we have mingled in the course of a long life. The friends of youth are seldom those of old age. The fluctuating wave bears us away from them forever. The most ardent friendships bow before its influence; and no man in his youth should be so sanguine in his ideas, as to imagine, that his present feelings can remain for any great length of time. Who can tell what may yet occur to change his views, and alter his emotions? Independently of the possibility of these feelings becoming blunted by vice, and lost in a host of contending passions, who shall venture to affirm that no circumstances can lessen their force, or hush them into silence?

As life proceeds, memory can not be supposed to add pleasure.

When the toils and turmoils of life are entered upon, when we become the sport of the wave, and launch out at once into the ever varying sea of human existence, subject to every anxiety, and the victims of every storm, where are the boasted joys of remembrance?— Even allowing youth to have been happy, and the recollections of former years mingled with delight, yet we would ask what pleasure can they confer on him who has survived the day of his happiness, and is now lost in darkness & in sorrow? They only the more forcibly remind him of what he <u>is</u>, by telling him what he <u>was</u>.

O memory! thou fond deceiver,
Still importunate and vain,
To former joys recurring ever,
And turning all the past to pain;
Thou'rt like the world, th' oppressed oppressing,
Thy smiles increase the wretch's woe,
And he who wants each other blessing,
In thee must ever find a foe.

GOLDSMITH.

In the evening of life, we sit down and contemplate the long retrospect that has gone by. We look back upon the parting clouds, and endeavor to gather delight at the contemplation. We think of the hopes, the fears, the joys, & the sorrows of a life too swiftly past away. We remember how eager were our expectations; and perhaps are induced to dwell with a certain degree of pleasure upon many portions of our life. The transports we may have felt, the joyful emotions that may have swelled our bosoms, the kind friends, the golden hours, that may have once enraptured us, may now again rise, softened indeed by the twilight of age, but still sweet and pleasurable. But on the other hand, the sad realities of life arise to darken the retrospect.

"In vain does memory renew
"The hours once ting'd in transports dye,
"The sad reverse soon starts to view,
"And turns the past to agony."—

We may have had the dearest connections, and the closest ties, snapt in sunder by the iron hand of death; the pestilence, and the sword may have poured sorrow into our hearts; the height of worldly prosperity may have been exchanged for the sorrows of penury, & the cold neglect of silent indifference; we may have been ever the sport of fortune, & the prey of adversity; our children perhaps have perished by mournful deaths, or lived only to curse us by their ingratitude, and shame us by their profligacy; or like us, to be partakers in the clouds and darkness of life, involved in misfortune, & overwhelmed by calamity.

It was probably one who had experienced the pains of memory in a peculiar degree, that penned the following lines. We discovered them in a collection of manuscripts by an anonymous author; and as they seem to harmonize in general with the ideas we have been attempting to communicate, we have not hesitated to insert them.

SONNET.

Oh! it is sad the grief of years to share —
The hopeless grief — and feel the biting sting
Of memory, and the darkness of despair,
To blast the hopes that fancy sketching
Had painted long and lovely, bright & fair
Oh! it is sad to see such vision fade
Like day's last hues to night's sepulchral
shade;
And feel that hopeless pause that will impart
Unutterable anguish to the heart;
That knows no rapturous dream of future joy,
That feels no pleasure from the mournful past,
And only rolls upon the anxious eye
The dreary thought of what the soul must taste
Upon the future scene's uncertain waste!

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Over such thoughts and such recollections, earth can pour no balm. This scene of tears and calamity can give no beauty to life, no comfort to memory. The brightness of the past is but as gloom, and the hopes of futurity are enshrouded in doubt and anxiety. All below is but a gorgeous and melancholy mockery of the soul — a deception upon the heart — a tempest to the eye. Memory has therefore few earthly recollections of bliss; — her most transporting ones are those, where

heaven itself was manifest. The gleams of sunshine — the beams of happiness the least alloyed — were those which came down from above, to cheer the pilgrim in his disastrous passage, and to illumine the sadness of disappointment, the darkness of blasted hopes, with the light & lustre of eternity. All else is indeed mournful; and memory, in her proudest and dearest recollections, can only dwell with real delight upon those sparklings of celestial glory. To the Christian, it must be a source of consolation & joyful hope, that when those clouds & storms are past, through which the beams of light now shine but sparingly & dimly, when earthly hope & earthly fear are hushed forever in the tomb, & the silence of death has quelled the painful remembrances of the heart, — he shall be wafted to a bright and glorious clime, where immortal

hope shall be realised in all its ~~glory and~~ beauty, the disappointments and contaminations of the world known no more, and Memory, released from all her painful associations, be lost in one round of grateful remembrance, and unfading delight.

E.